

Winter 2011 / Issue 7
The Hart House Music Magazine

Demo

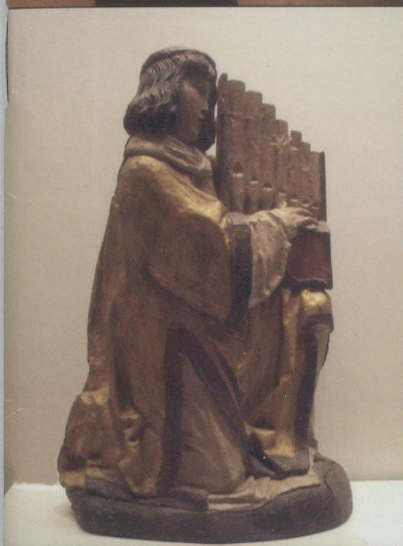


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LETTER TO THE READER

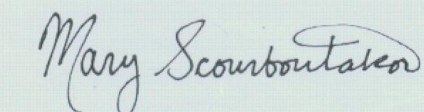
Dearest Reader,

You may, or may not have heard of Robert Schumann, a composer from the Romantic Era. Though he dreamed of becoming a pianist, his determination to become a virtuoso resulted in a self-inflicted hand injury (supposedly due to his attempt to improve the strength of his fingers). The reason for this anecdote is the significance of the contributions made by Schumann despite his failed dream. In addition to composing, Schumann was a music-critic and created the first-ever music magazine, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Journal of Music). Over 175 years later, we're still writing about music. Victor Hugo once said, "Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent." In many ways, it is impossible to be silent about music itself. Thus, we bring you another issue of Demo filled with articles on anything and everything related to music.

Inside, you'll find interesting facts (for instance, did you know that John Lennon visited U of T in 1965?) in our Music on Campus section alongside our Hart House news update and other U of T themed articles. Be sure to check out the student profiles in this issue. We not only feature the Hart House Chamber Strings and two fantastic bands, but we've even got a professor-led extra-curricular music group, called the Semiotones, and twins that play the sitar. As you'll see, the talent at U of T never ceases to amaze. In Features you can learn about the Music Genome Project or take in the nostalgia of TV Show Theme Songs and Music Album Cover Art. From Japan to San Francisco, our writers have been traveling the world and shared their experiences in the Opinions section. Lastly, in Reviews, we've got on-campus and off-campus shows (including a review of Chick Corea at Massey Hall); a CD review and one writer's journey to Radio City Music Hall in NYC.

And finally, because this is my final issue as Editor-in-Chief, I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to DEMO and has made this possible.

Enjoy!



Mary Scourboutakos

DEMO

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Demo welcomes letters from its readers. Let us know what YOU think of Demo! E-mail us at: demo.harthouse@gmail.com

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Mary Scourboutakos is a fourth year student double majoring in Nutritional Sciences and Music. She has been Demo's Editor-in-Chief for the past two years and also writes a column for the Varsity.

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WATER COLOUR ARTIST



Maybelle Leung studies English at UofT. She loves art, literature, and philosophical discussions, and has recently become a coffee and Blogger addict. Maybelle also does work-study (illustration) for the Humanities department. You may view her artwork at <http://maybel-leleung.carbonmade.com>

COVER LEGEND

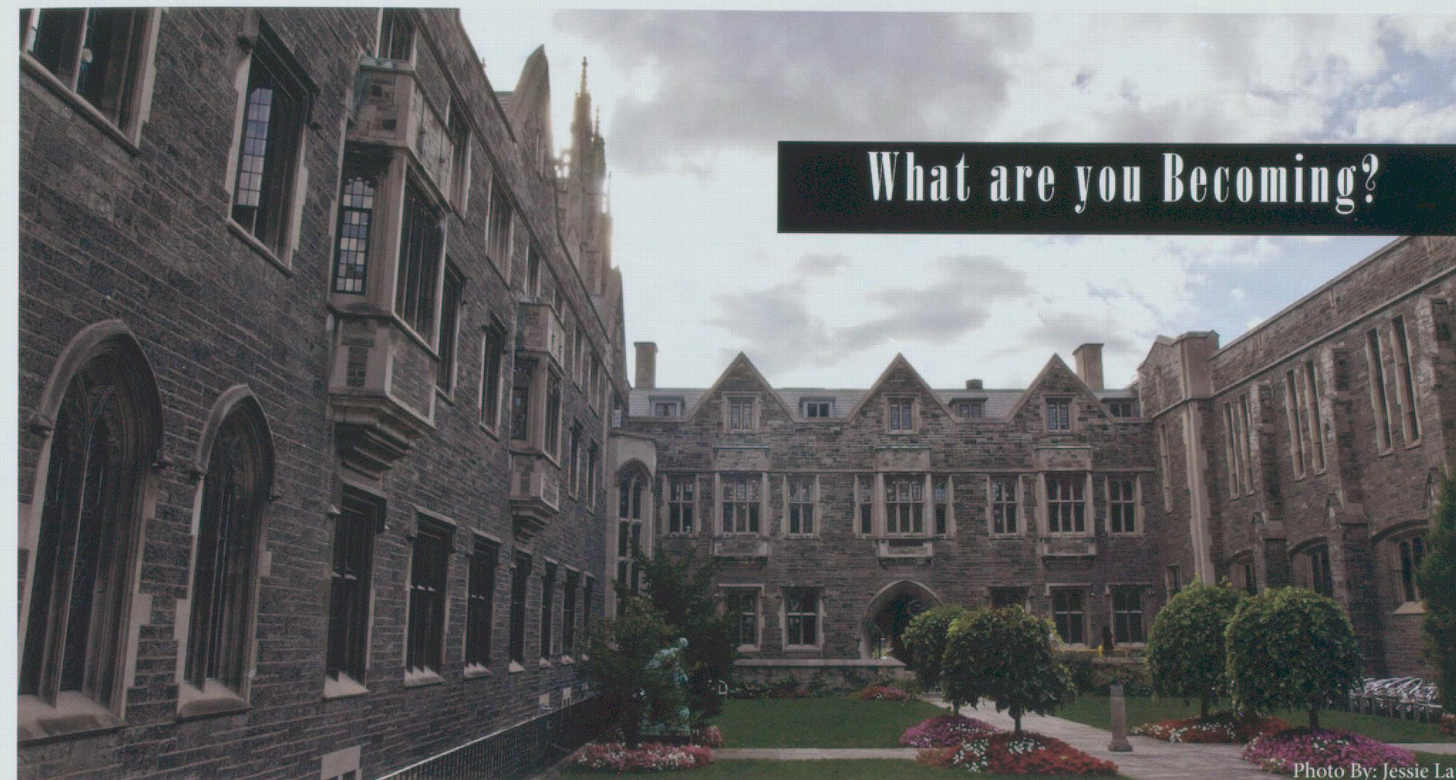
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Front Cover:

A1, A2, A4, B4, C1, C3, D1, D2, D3, D4 - Musée de la Musique (Paris); A2 - Opera Garnier (Paris' Opera House); B1 - Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris); B2 - Streets of Paris; B3 - Musée de la Publicité (Paris); C2 - St. Etienne Du Mont Church (Paris); C4 - Musée d'Orsay (Paris).

Back Cover:

A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B4, C1, C4, D1, D3, D4 - Musée de la Musique (Paris); B2, D2 - Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris); B3, C2, C3 - Musée du Louvre (Paris).



What are you Becoming?

Photo By: Jessie Lau

This was the question we posed to students as part of our Wide Open House exhibit. It's an interesting question and if Hart House were to answer it I think it would be best summed up as "evolving". The beginning of the new school year has brought with it a new vision for the House and many new programmes, activities and faces. Look around and you will see the halls abuzz with activities from engaging and socially provocative art displays on the main floor, to line ups for athletic class registration or in-studio conversations at CIUT in the Map Room. Wander down to the Reading Room and you might just happen upon a Get Crafty Thursday afternoon workshop or drop-in class or sit back and enjoy our ThursTeas: free cookie and tea service from 11 - 1PM. Climb up the stairs to the second floor landing on Mondays and you might be lucky enough to get yourself a free Shiatsu massage! Go a bit higher to the third floor and indulge in over 3000 records and hundreds of CD's in the Record Room, put your feet up, play the music loud and break all the rules your parents used to give you when listening to music at home. All over the House exciting and inviting things are taking place. Music remains one of the staples of free programming that continues to delight and attract students and community for a mixed bag evening of musical styles. Fridays are going strong with jazz - crossing the borders of traditional to crooners and chanteuses, master players to world fusion, jazz is a style that has been able to bend to the times and has breathed new life into urban genres such as hip hop, neo soul and R&B.

New listeners of jazz and those who have followed it for years are coming together to share and enjoy in its longevity and classic sounds. We have presented special events working with community organization Keys to the Studio—a group that pairs people with intellectual disabilities with professional musicians and we are working closely with the new house band Henri Faberge and his Feint of Heart show a whirlwind multi media cabaret salon involving music, spoken word, video, theatre, music and a lot of whimsy. Students are well represented in the University Gospel Choir, one of our performers at the venerable Sunday Concert series, and we play host, muse and support system to many aspiring musicians, poets and instrumentalists in our Open Mic showcases. The Music committee has some innovative events coming up in second term, Frank Horvat's Green Keys Eco Tour and a presentation by Six String Nation founder Jowi Taylor, looking at the ways in which the uniquely Canadian guitar "voyageur" has become the new narrative of what it is to be Canadian in the 21st century. If you're thinking Mounties and timbits...think again. At Hart House we are continually inspired and musically transformed and enriched by the experiences we share and the diversity around us. Hart House offers you a place to bring those experiences and to add them to our cultural brew. **'Who you are is welcome, who you are becoming is why we're here'**



Zoe Dille is a global soul, a lover of life and a certified yoga teacher. She holds a BA and a M. Ed from U of T and for the last 9 years has been mixing creativity, innovation and instinct to the position programme coordinator at Hart House.

Top row: Our Lady Peace
 Second row: Pierre Elliot Trudeau
 with (Third row) John Lennon and
 Yoko Ono.
 Third row: Toronto Conservatory
 of Music
 Fifth Row: John McCaul



University of Toronto was founded in 1843 under the name of King's College. It was an incredibly different world from today; a time when the young students, who were predominantly male, couldn't even dream of the eras of rock 'n roll or the emergence of pop and heavy metal. Throughout its history, music has played an important role at this university.

Here are some important and interesting facts about U of T's musical history that you can use to impress your friends or wow family members with:

1. The first president of King's College was **John McCaul**. He loved music so much that he was an unofficial supply teacher and private music instructor.
2. In 1908, the editor of the *Varsity*, **Claris Edwin Silcox**, wrote the lyrics to "The Blue and White" song, U of T's anthem.
3. In 1919, the Hart House musical club passed a decree that "ragtime" music could not be played on its pianos. The ban was not lifted until approximately four decades later.
4. In 1924, University of Toronto authorized the purchase of the Canadian Academy of Music, leading to extraordinary opportunities for learning music and demonstrating Canadian talent.

MUSICAL HISTORY FACTS & FAMOUS ALUMNI

There have also been a number of famous alumni involved with music:

Ross Parmenter (B.A. 1933 Trin.) – Music editor for The New York Times.

Teresa Statas (Art Dip. Mus. 1959) – Soprano opera singer with the Metropolitan Opera.

Paul Shaffer (B.A. 1971 U.C.) – Leader of the CBS Orchestra for The Late Show with David Letterman,

5. In 1936, the Honours BA in music was created for musicians wanting higher-level music and liberal arts education.
6. After the Second World War, in 1947, the Undergraduate Association of the Faculty of Music was drawn up by the Faculty of Music at University of Toronto. Its policy was "to take an aggressive attitude towards the future of music in Canada, and its composers and musicians."
7. In 1969, **John Lennon and Yoko Ono** came to U of T to see Marshall McLuhan, the professor of English literature, as they were on their way to meet Pierre Trudeau in Ottawa, to talk about music and peace. Embarrassingly, it is said that McLuhan told them, "These portals have been honoured by your presence." During this visit, John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band made their debut live performance at Varsity Stadium for the "Toronto Rock and Roll Revival" a 12 hour concert that resulted in the release of the "Live Peace in Toronto 1969" album. Some cite this performance as having had an influence on the Beatles breaking up less than a year later. Alice Cooper, Little Richard, The Doors and Jerry Lee Lewis also performed at the concert which is the subject of a documentary entitled "Sweet Toronto".
8. In 1984, when Hart House tried to choose a piano for the Great Hall, the music committee had eight professional pianists play on seven grand pianos to determine which piano was just right. A 1935 New York Steinway was chosen.

former musical director of Saturday Night Live, co-writer of "It's Raining Men".

David J. Elliot (B.Mus., M.Mus., B.Ed.) – Professor of music at New York University.

Raine Maida (dropped out) – Vocalist for the Canadian rock band Our Lady Peace.

Maggie MacDonald (B.A. U.C.) – Playwright, musician and writer, member of the indie pop band The Hidden Cameras.

It is evident that music plays and has played a huge role in the lives of the students, faculty and alumni of U of T today and throughout its history. As Dr. Harry Somers, a graduate from the music program at U of T, said in 1976, "[Music] has been solace to the lonely, heroic illusion to the discouraged, aphrodisiac to the needy, order to the distracted and so much more."

Sydney Riemschneider is in her first year at the University of Toronto, never seen without her iPod handy and loves a great variety of music from all genres.



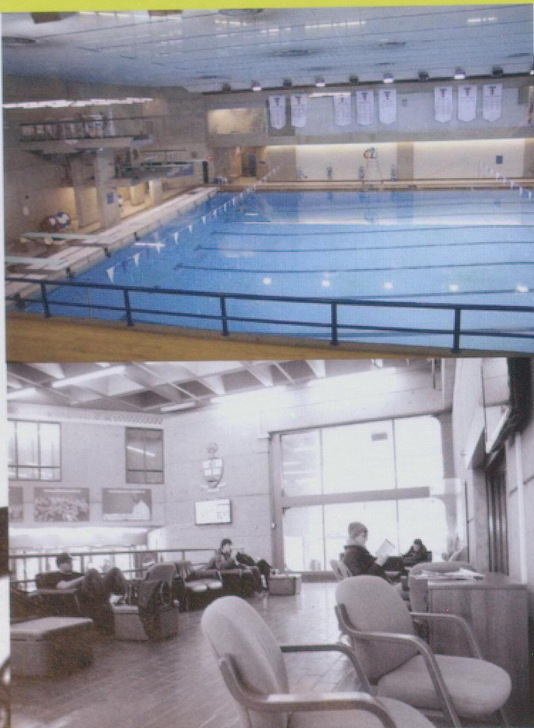
Setting a Soundtrack to UofT



Assunta Alegiani The world according to Assunta is 80% music and 50% other distractions clothed in creativity. She is also superb at juggling.

It is that time of the year where everything seems dipped in grey, with school and the cold grip of winter keeping your mood in the negative. Remember that the downtown campus has a gazillion spots to pursue something other than the excellence of your next essay, so get out there and make your tuition fees pay off (impossible, I know)! Here are some ideas for places to check out and music to listen to whilst exploring:

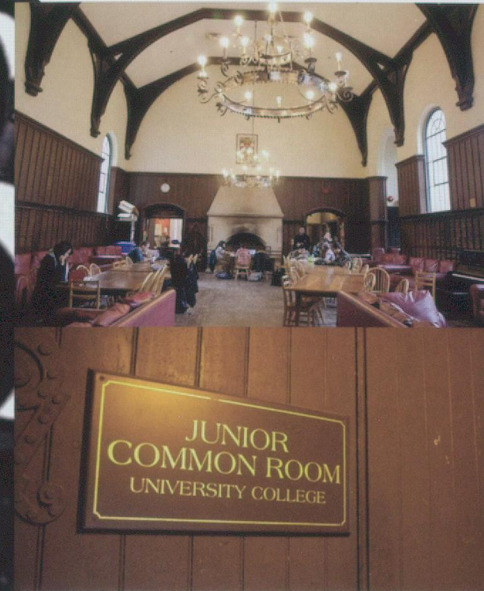
Athletic Centre



TV ON THE RADIO — "WOLF LIKE ME"

Alright, I know it takes a lot of motivation to get yourself wrapped up in the onion that is your winter outfit and go outside, only to have to take all the layers off again and enter the sweaty haven that makes you regret all the delicious food you stuffed yourself with in December. In this case though you should kick yourself in the butt, it is a short-term vs. long-term pleasure battle, and you know which should win this one. TV on the Radio's "Wolf Like Me" is the perfect boot to get you going. The driving beat is exhilarating and fuels aggressions that are just what you need to show that treadmill who is the boss.

The Junior Common Room(JCR)



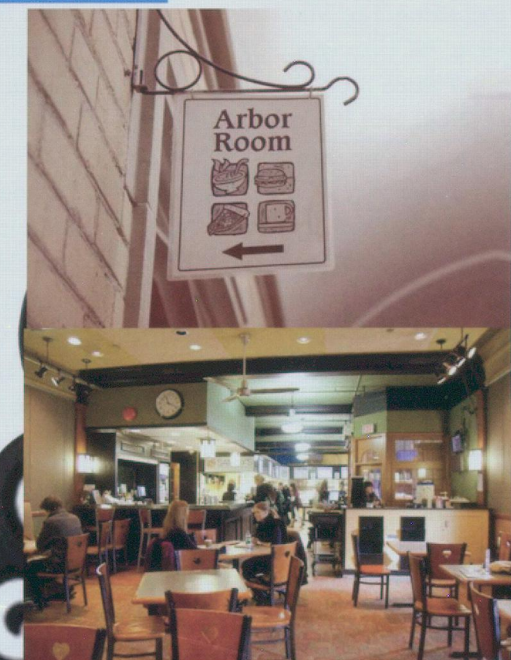
MOGWAI — "TAKE ME SOMEWHERE NICE"

You have an hour in-between classes, and just don't know how to keep your eyes open any longer? Escape to couch heaven—the J.C.R. A hidden gem, it is located in the west wing of the University College building and is packed with the most comfortable couches you have ever rested your buttocks on—and they are even a foxy red colour. Sit back, relax, and let Glasgow post-rockers Mogwai take you "Somewhere Nice". After your nap, grab a cup of the best coffee on campus, and a bite to eat from Diabolo's, conveniently located right next to the couch area. Oh and remember, you still have a class to go to!

The Arbor Room in Hart House

OHBIJOU — "BLACK ICE"

Keeping your mind off school is just as important as keeping focused; it is all about the right balance, baby! Lucky for you Hart House is located in the heart of campus, meaning that you can dive right into the Arbor Room after your intense study session at any of the libraries. There are free concerts going on throughout the year, so grab a beer from the bar and get excited for the music. Listen to Ohbijou's "Black Ice"— they have played the Arbor Room before. Sounds good? Just follow the Hart House road.



ALUMNI PROFILE:

THE MACHAMS



Sandra De Grandis is currently in her final year at the University of Toronto, completing a double major in Sociology and Book and Media Studies. She likes eating wings and collecting comic books.



Toronto is home to a great indie music scene, with countless venues and events supporting the local musicians, including The MacHams, who incidentally happen to be University of Toronto alumni. Consisting of three brothers (from oldest to youngest): George, Noel and JP Dabbagh, the MacHams have an impressive resume so far. The band played at this year's Indie Week Canada, which was held from October 13-17. They also played at the Halloween Showcase at Downsview Gand Prix on October 30th, which was open to the general public and was held to raise awareness for Canadian Blood Services and blood typing. The MacHams are scheduled to play at the Canadian Music Fest next March 9-13, as well as going on tour in Germany in 2011. The tour is an all expenses paid prize awarded to the band for winning the "Best Live" award at the 2010 TIMA (Toronto Independent Music Awards). They have also won the "Best Musical Act" award at the HMFF (Hamilton Music and Film Festival). The band has also recently released their full length debut album *Stare, Smile, Talk*.

The name 'MacHams' may fool you at first into thinking you're actually hearing the name of the

latest burger innovation from McDonalds. In fact, it originates from the Arabic word 'maqam,' which is a type of Middle-Eastern musical scale that includes quarter tones. According to George, they came up with the name when they were scolded by their mother.

"One day in summer of 2003, Mommy came down to our basement rehearsal space and called us a bunch of maqams. We were puzzled because we hadn't heard the word before. Mom said it means that we're a bunch of show-offs (in Turkish slang), but Dad added that in fact it is an Arabic word for a type of music scale. We loved it...music + show-offs...we changed maqam to look like a last name to show our union as brothers, and we were since called The MacHams."

The trio are outgoing and definitely have a good sense of humour. Their music is a blend of alternative, indie and just plain fun tunes. You can easily picture yourself listening to their music as you drive down a highway in the middle of summer. I went to one of their shows and sat down with the brothers for a chat just to get to know them a little bit better.

Q :
What inspired you to become musicians?

A: It's in our genes, and we were surrounded with musical instruments everywhere in our house – Mom is also musical and used to be a soloist at church; Dad conducted his share of choirs, played keys and directed his own bands. He also plays a mean accordion, and his father played the Oud (Middle Eastern guitar) and the violin. Anyway, growing up we would observe and experience the music encompassing our parents' lives and we just wanted to embrace that too! Not even kidding, in our parents' house we have a piano, a bunch of keyboards, couple of drum sets, a couple of saxophones, a couple of violins, a trumpet, a flute, a clarinet, a few hand drums (djembe, dumbek, bongos), a bunch of guitars (acoustic, electric, classical, and bass), an oud, a couple of accordions, a banjo, ukuleles, uhh what else...lol

So why did we start the band?

I dunno, it kinda just happened...JP was starting to take the guitar seriously about 8 years ago. That inspired Noel to do the same. And then that got me thinking about a drum set. It all happened so fast and we had so much fun playing anything and everything. Overtime, we developed our own style and learned more about everything that comes with playing in a band.

Q :
Do you think music today is different from the past, in regards to the prevalence of things like autotune and so many lame pop acts?

A: Absolutely, it's the cancer of music - the digital era is taking the music out of music. Not only is it in commercial radio, but even the art of live music has evolved to using samplers and vocoders (the T-Pain effect...ewww!). Here's an analogy: the youth of today love to eat McDonald's because it's edible, it's cheap and it's widely available. They haven't been exposed to the finer foods, finer music. We really try to stay true to good music, I mean, our live and recorded music is all real...it's us.

Q :
What are your musical influences or favourite artists?

A: The Weakerthans, Copeland, Foo Fighters, U2, Lenny Kravitz, The Killers, The Stills, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix, Oasis, UB40, and Boyz II Men ... okay fine, the Beatles too.

Q :
How would you describe your music?

A: Very brotherly, lol. It's edgy rock meets feel-good vibes – it's definitely very melodic, filled with lyrics about the joys, uncertainties, and pitfalls of relationships.

Q :
Do you find it difficult to balance both teaching and playing?

A: Nope. Basically, we're teachers by day and rock stars by night!

Q :
How long do you see yourself playing music for?

A: Forever!!! I can't prove it scientifically, but music is flowing in our blood!

Q :
What advice would you give someone who's thinking of making a career out of music?

A: Are you sure you're ready? That basically means that you have to eat and breathe music. Everything you do will be focused in and around your music. But if you're determined, keep it about the music and not about a trendy haircut ...or the next lame autotune-like fad.

INTERVIEW WITH U OF T'S "YOUNGEST" PROFESSOR (AT HEART), DR. MARCEL DANESI, AND HIS ONE-OF-A- KIND BAND, THE SEMIOTONES!



Photo: www.semiotones.bravehost.com

The Semiotones are something of an anomaly from what one would expect from either a student group or a band. It's clear that the connections formed in this group come from a love of music—as if the music is an expression of each individual on a deeper level, allowing them all to connect more intimately compared to, say, discussing their research.

A highly regarded linguist, semiotician, and professor, Dr. Marcel Danesi is also a very talented musician who started a band right here on campus. The band consists of talented vocalists, Dr. Danesi as the pianist, and a variety of other instrumentalists. We had the pleasure of talking to him, as well as one of the vocalists, Lydia Bojeczko, about their unique experience.

Demo: I can't believe that a professor would play in a band with students. Please tell us how the Semiotones got started. What does "Semiotones" mean?

Dr. Danesi: I wanted to reactivate what I had done for decades—a "soirée" with students, parents and friends in which we play music, dance, etc. I have always done this both for fun with students outside of the classroom and to collect money for the Hospital for Sick Children. I love being with students. We joined YouTube and instead of "Semitones," we were registered as "Semiotones." But, this is great because it's a blend of "semiotics" and "tones."

Demo: What has been the response to the Semiotones, from students, other Victoria College/U of T faculty, and the general public?

Dr. D: Incredibly positive. Our first performance was packed with students, parents and colleagues. We have support at every level, from the Principal to the physical plant employees, who help us with technical matters. The Cat's Eye and its management allow us to use their instruments and equipment. And, of course, the enthusiasm shown by students at the concerts is at times overwhelming. The few times that we have played in public, outside the campus, have also been incredibly successful. We did a gig for the Italian Consulate outside on their lawn near Dundas St. in late August. The police had to come by and direct traffic because people were literally dancing in the street!

Demo: What have been the accomplishments of the Semiotones? Have there been any obstacles?

Dr. D: The greatest accomplishment is that we are still together and continuing to improve artistically. We have produced a CD of classic songs of the 1950s, available in several stores and at Vic (relevant info on our website) and we have just started recording our second CD of all original songs covering a broad range of styles and genres, including rock and roll, jazz, blues and Latin. When something is done with love, there are no obstacles, as far as I can see.

MC: How does the Semiotones differ from other U of T clubs/bands? What gives them that certain "edge" over other clubs/bands?

Dr. D: How many clubs do you know that have a professor as a member? When other academics hear or see us, they simply ask, "how do you do it?" I am able to bring the academic and intellectual aspects of my job to the band members and really bond with them. It's something that I think other professors should be envious of.

Lydia Bojeczko: We're not part of this club to benefit ourselves. Lots of people think about what looks good on paper, joining tons of clubs. But this one is just about having a good time.

Demo: What does the Semiotones mean to you?

LB: It's a second family. Being a part of this band is a different university experience. You're so used to detached relationships with other professors, sitting in classes with more than 500 students, but Dr. Danesi makes you feel you're not just a number. I feel really connected and comfortable here.

Dr. D: When these kids pick up my songs and perform them with such feelings, it's respect towards me. Or can you say, love? The greatest accomplishment of my career.

Demo: Any plans or goals for the near future?

Dr. D: We are planning to go to the city of Florence as part of an exchange with the Middlebury School in Florence students and students at the University of Florence. We will be putting on two public concerts there. The objective is to export our enthusiasm and collaborative model (prof-students) elsewhere.

We at Demo love what they're doing and wish them all the best!

For more details:

<http://www.semiotones.bravehost.com/>
<http://www.youtube.com/user/semiotones>



Monica Chao is a second year Chemistry and Human Biology double major at the University of Toronto, who also enjoys the finer things in life such as writing, music, and nail art.

Rachel Chepesiuk

Donlands and Mortimer



Julia Ciabanu is a second year Psych major at U of T, also studying Music and Art. She spends the majority of her time focusing on her minors, one example of such behavior being this article.

Donlands and Mortimer – you may or may not know that it is an intersection in Toronto. More importantly, however, this intersection is the birthplace of a band with the same name. Take two tenth graders playing weird jazz music and give them a couple of years to play around. Then find a husky-voiced songwriter through musical connections, a bassist impressively playing Radiohead at a party, two talented horn player friends from school and you have the beginning of the strange and wonderful thing that is Donlands and Mortimer.

At this point, four years ago, the band's venues were mostly their friends' basements, and since then they have moved onto places like The Drake Hotel, C'est What, art galleries on Queen street and Kensington Market. The line up mentioned above goes as such: Carmen Elle on vocals and guitar, U of T's own Johnny Spence on keys, Ben Harney on bass, Edwin Sheard on alto sax, Ewan Kay on trombone and Steven Foster on vocals and drums.

Donlands and Mortimer have achieved a moderate following by playing consistently throughout Toronto with other local bands such as Yuka, La Casa Muerte, The People of Canada, and Katie Stelmanis. Their song "Starboard" from their self-released EP entitled *Scylla* was featured

in a Molsen Canadian beer commercial. Their song "Your Shell" was in a CBC short film entitled "SOAP". In the past few months they have been taking a bit of a break from performing and have written a collection of new material which they are very excited to start showcasing.

Now for the most important part – what do they sound like? As with most artists, their style has evolved and is set to keep doing so. The band members like to think of themselves as creating pop songs that reach out in new directions. Their ultimate goal is to write innovative music that can still be catchy and enjoyed by their audience. However, when I popped in their *Scylla* EP, I found the songs to have more of a funk or jazz sound. This results from various elements including the use of the blues scale, horns, smooth vocals, and complex, syncopated rhythms. The songs have incredible build-ups and listening to them almost requires you to tap along.

More recently, they have been focusing solely on writing music that offers a lot to its listeners and keeps them interested. Their newer music maintains a diverse sound with fluid, laid-back songs like "Lie to Rest" and opposing upbeat and dissonant songs like "New Mythology". Whether or not their music is within a particular

genre, all the band hopes for is to express themselves in the way they please and as a result, please others as well.

When asked about their writing process, they answered that one person will usually come up with a complete song idea and the others will add onto it. This is because each member is quite opinionated about their music, and prefers to create their own single idea first which can then be built on. Although each member is opinionated, this does not mean that they don't respect and appreciate each other's ideas. They work as a collective, with each person contributing their own element to every song.

When asked if they think it is important to send a message with their music and lyrics, they answered that their goal is not to convey any overt political or moral messages. If anything, they use varied musical styles to display their interest in writing assorted music and personal yet abstract lyrics to express a certain idea or feeling for each song.

The band members listen to a wide range of music, from Norwegian black metal and Scottish band Biffy Clyro, to classical and jazz music, all the way to alternative pop bands like Deerhoof and The Dirty Projectors. Most of them are in school for music,

which explains the priority they place on making music for its own sake. This however, is not to give the idea that they wish to be an intellectual, esoteric band that no one can relate to. Donlands and Mortimer is a group that one can see for the first time and then bond with afterwards in Queen's Park while they continue to serenade you. They are a friendly bunch that simply wants to spread as much good music around and make as many people happy as possible.

In my opinion, this is a fantastic thing to have around and should never cease to be encouraged. So give them a listen and support the local talent that is bound to continue making sound for a while to come.



The Hart House

CHAMBER STRINGS

By: Monica Chao

The Hart House Chamber Strings is composed of current U of T students and alumni. Led by conductor Oliver Balaburski, most members are non-professional musicians and work very hard to keep up with his expectations. Read on, to find out what attracts members to stay in the group even after graduating; DEMO has exclusive insight from the conductor and the president of the group!

Balaburski was appointed as conductor of the Hart House Chamber Strings in September 2008 and as Music Director of Huronia Symphony Orchestra in November 2010. He is very well trained and has had many exceptional concerts with distinguished musical groups including the Symphony Orchestra of the Royal College of Music in London, England and the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra, in addition to others. He started his Master's degree in Performance at U of T in 2006 and has studied with renowned mentors and teachers.

Conductor Balaburski understands that the group is composed of members that vary in their musical experiences and chooses material that is realistically playable. Both the conductor and members work very hard and even play some pieces that professional orchestras play.



Mini-Interview with conductor Oliver Balaburski

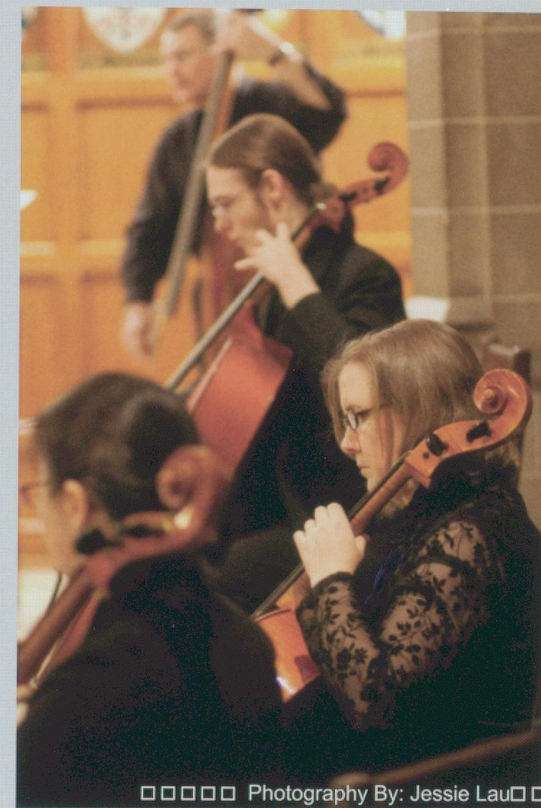
DEMO: What's it like to be the conductor of the HH chamber strings?

Oliver Balaburski: Well, working with nonprofessional musicians is harder because there are technical issues that have to be solved at the rehearsals. I have musicians at different levels; there are some players that have good musical education from the Royal Conservatory of Music, some players have orchestra experience, but most people learn right here at rehearsals. They are very enthusiastic and love what they do. This allows us to work hard for a longer time.

Upcoming Concerts:

January 22 & April 9
@ the Great Hall

For more information, please visit
<http://hhchamberstrings.sa.utoronto.ca/>
<http://www.harthouse.utoronto.ca/event/chamber-strings-rehearsal>



Photography By: Jessie Lau

Mini-Interview with double bassist, webmaster, and president of the group, Blaise Alleyne.

DEMO: Why did you join the HH chamber strings? Are/ were you a music student?

Blaise Alleyne: No, I majored in Computer Science and minored in English and philosophy. I played violin before university and was looking for an ensemble to play with in first year. I wanted to keep it up.

DEMO: How did you get involved, not just as a member, but also as webmaster and president of the group? How is it, taking on so many roles?

BA: A few years ago, for one of the concerts, I got involved not just playing with the group, but also helping the group out. Then when the group was looking for a new secretary/president, I got the position. So, I do technically have two positions in the group. It is a lot of work, but I have a good executive committee team.

DEMO: How has the group changed since you joined?

BA: I joined in September 2005 and I've gone through three conductors. I caught the last few years of Paul McCulloch who started the pops concert. Then after he left, Angel Chan, who was a member of the group, took over for a year. She was a student from the Faculty of Music, and it was neat to see a familiar face, rising from our own ranks to conductor, and also learning along with us. The third one is the current conductor, Oliver Balaburski, and he's great as well. He's been very supportive and has carried on the traditions of the regular classical concerts and also the pops concert, while adding his personal insights and flavors to our playing and techniques.

DEMO: What are your plans/goals/ expectations for the HH chamber strings in the near future?

BA: We've had a good thing going for a number of years. We have a solid three concerts each year. It's pretty predictable. We have a steady audience, the regulars, but we

want to get the word out, and maybe collaborate with other student music groups in the future.

With an adept conductor and a competent executive team, the members of the HH Chamber Strings are in a great environment where they can enjoy music and form lasting bonds. It's no wonder that some members stay in the group even after graduating!

Be sure to check out their concerts: January 22 and April 9 in the Great Hall, featuring classical and modern music. They are practicing tirelessly and have rehearsals every Monday 7:30-10PM in the East Common Room. The Hart House Chamber Strings is a non-auditioned group, so anyone (not just music students) is welcome to contact them and join.

Painting: Andy Warhol's "Eleven String Instruments c.1957"

sitar lessons with a master

Profile of Sandhya and Swapna Mylabathula

By: Mary Scourboutakos



Most people have taken piano lessons, or played in a school band, but how many people can say that they take sitar lessons? Or better yet, how many people take sitar lessons from someone who was taught by Ravi Shankar and tutored George Harrison? Sandhya and Swapna Mylabathula are fourth year students majoring in Nutritional Sciences and Human Biology. They are twins and they both study the sitar.

The sitar is an instrument associated with classical Hindustani music. Sandhya and Swapna described the sitar by saying it is "nearly as tall as we are," the bottom is made out of a dried out gourd and it is aesthetically very intricate. The posture for playing it "is very different from typical Western styles, we sit with our legs crossed, with the gourd cradled in the curve of the left foot."

A metal pick, called a mizraab, is used to pluck the strings. The sitar contains seven main strings, and an additional thirteen sympathetic strings underneath, whose vibrations provide overtones when the main seven strings are played. The manner in which the strings are plucked allows for microtones, which they explained, adds another dimension to the music.

Sandhya and Swapna first became interested in the sitar during high school. They attended Etobicoke School for the Arts where they studied violin, and picked the sitar as the topic for a class assignment. Around the same time, they saw an ad in the newspaper for a sitar teacher. This was how they found their teacher, or guru, Shambu Das. Shambu Das is one of the

foremost sitarists in the world. Because Ravi Shankar was both Shambhu Das' and George Harrison's guru, Shambu Das used to tutor George Harrison on the sitar as a supplement to his lessons with Ravi Shankar.

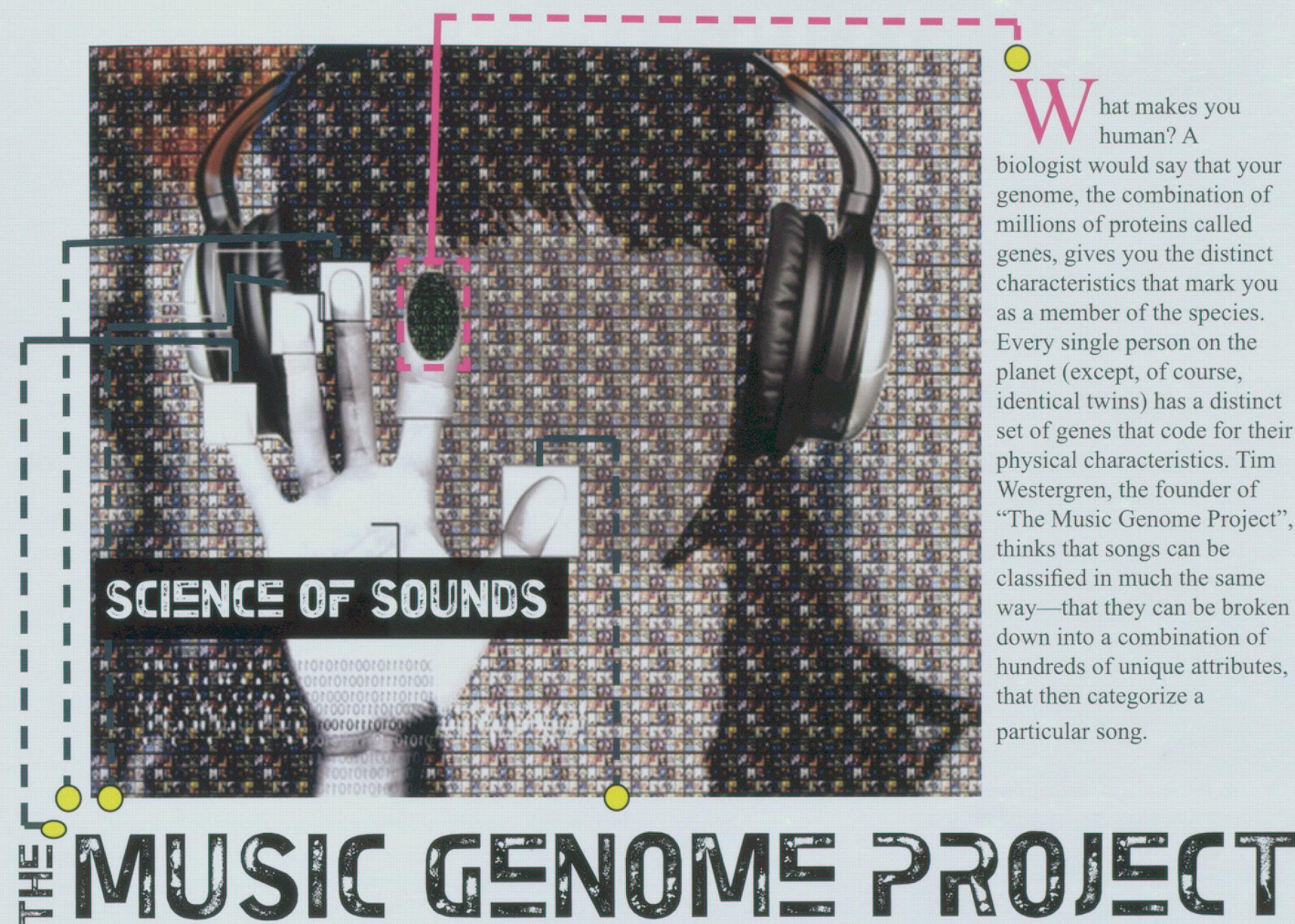
A sitar lesson is not like your typical piano lesson, as there is no standard pedagogical method. The twins explained that a sitar student learns music that is specific to their guru, which was passed down from their guru's guru. Interestingly, sitar music is not supposed to be written down, one is expected to play from memory. However, when notation is used, it is unique according to the guru who has written it.

Because the sitar is always accompanied by the tabla (small hand drums) Sandhya and Swapna described how they practice sitar with a drum machine which essentially functions as a more intricate equivalent of the western metronome.

They described one of the most interesting things about their experiences learning to play the sitar by saying, "(our teacher) talks about philosophy, (and) knows how to complement musical teaching with things that help us get a big picture of what we're doing." Based on ancient Indian spiritual philosophies, their teacher explains the native names of specific notes and their larger significance within the piece.

Like any musical instrument, the sitar takes years to master; as a result Sandhya and Swapna intend to continue taking lessons indefinitely.

Photo: A younger Shambu Das with George Harrison in India
<http://www.shambhudas.com>



Westergren's project is currently being used as the basis for Pandora, a US-based online music streaming service. A user can create their own personal station based on their favourite artist or song, and spend hours listening to music that lead to the discovery of a lot of new music that is specific to the listener's tastes. Popularity is not considered when selecting which song to play next; instead, the playlist is based on elements of the song that the user originally selected.

But how is each song categorized? Each piece of music in the database has been poured over by a musicologist, who quantifies the song on scales relating to all of the major musical elements: structure, melody, harmony, instrumentation, vocals and lyrics; as well as many

different subcategories in each section. After about half an hour, the song has been assigned a number in upwards of 400 categories, essentially giving it a fingerprint that is distinct from the other 700,000 in the database. Pandora's program uses this information to link songs together that have similar elements, presenting the listener with songs that they are likely to enjoy.

Westergren began the initial stages of the project in 2000 after working as a film composer. The process of trying to decode the director's musical taste, in order to write music to highlight the scenes, helped him hone the skills he used to make the project. As a musician himself, he was also fed up with the method of most music recommendation engines, which choose songs based on what

What makes you human? A biologist would say that your genome, the combination of millions of proteins called genes, gives you the distinct characteristics that mark you as a member of the species. Every single person on the planet (except, of course, identical twins) has a distinct set of genes that code for their physical characteristics. Tim Westergren, the founder of "The Music Genome Project", thinks that songs can be classified in much the same way—that they can be broken down into a combination of hundreds of unique attributes, that then categorize a particular song.

other people (who like the same artists) are listening to. He believes this leads to popular music being recommended more often than music that is genuinely similar to the initial song choice. Collectively, these influences inspired Westergren to create Pandora's large and especially detailed database.

A few thousand songs are added to the database each month, making even more music discovery possible. Pandora is currently only available to listeners in the USA due to copyright laws, but the existence of a technology that can introduce people to new bands gives exciting insight into the future of the music industry.

Elena Gritzan is a first year student studying physical sciences. She spent her high school years playing flute and piccolo in concert band, and generally devouring as much music as possible. She balances labs and memorizing reaction mechanisms with listening to and discovering new music, as well as harbouring a not-so-secret obsession with Owen Pallett.



EIGHT MYTHIC ALBUM COVERS

The album cover has evolved throughout music's history to become its own art form. It acts as both a complement and first impression to the music that exists within the gate-fold sleeve or the jewel CD case. Columbia records pioneered the form in 1938 as both a marketing tool and a way for artists to express themselves. However, the art of albums has become distinct from its commercial purposes, and can help build iconic images to accompany legendary bands. As a way of adding a visual element to music, album cover art is unparalleled in its effectiveness.

Following are eight exemplary album covers.

1. JOY DIVISION – UNKNOWN PLEASURES

During the time of *Unknown Pleasures*' release, the heart and soul of punk had been stripped from all musical scenes and replaced by a resigned, bitter desperation. No band embodied the ennui of the genre of "post-punk" better than Joy Division, whose music on this album was made to soundtrack suicide and self-mutilation. Its cover sets the tone of Joy Division even before the album itself starts playing, and its strength lies in its ambiguity – is the figure a depiction of transmissions from a world more desolate than our own? Do the stark white lines represent a man's final heartbeats, perhaps Ian Curtis's own? Or was it the visual depiction of a man whose art screamed "who is ever able to give a damn"?

2. NIRVANA – IN UTERO

Nirvana's follow-up to *Nevermind* had, in many ways, a more significant album cover than its predecessor. It revealed a band willing to shed the studio gloss of their bestseller and bare it all, both musically and visually. Kurt Cobain had always been fascinated by bodily functions; that much is clear in lyrics such as "throw down your umbilical noose so I can climb right back." But the real symbolism of the cross-sectioned woman is in its foreshadowing of Cobain's own martyrdom, which he earned on this album by laying out his own innards for the world to see.

3. BOARDS OF CANADA – MUSIC HAS THE RIGHT TO CHILDREN

These ambient electronica pioneers defined nostalgia with their breakthrough album, *Music Has the Right to Children*, through a series of sound collages, children's voices, and earworm melodies. Its album cover is appropriately both familiar and creepy, suggesting a family camping trip where all the faces are erased. Boards of Canada are the perfect soundtrack for stumbling drunkenly through old photo albums, and its album cover is a photo you would expect to find hidden in between pages – a reminder that childhood is as sinister as it is whole-some.

4. NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL – IN THE AEROPLANE OVER THE SEA

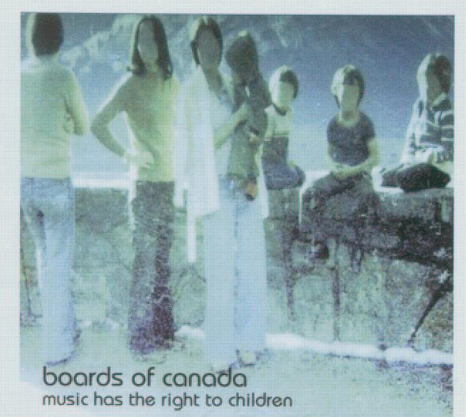
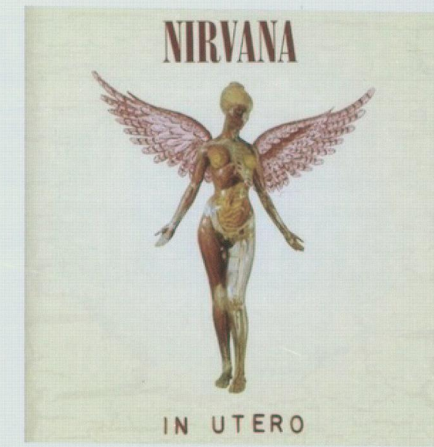
What do Anne Frank, Siamese twins and definitive Indie Rock have in common? This album, whose influences are felt today in bands from Arcade Fire to Brand New. All of the album's influences coalesce in their album art, which evokes the Holocaust and working as a carnie and Spanish surrealism all at once. A woman with a kettle drum for a face is saluting Hitler and the music within is no less bizarre and no less touching. Magnum's lyrics, clearly about a certain girl's diaries found after WWII, reflect the cover's surrealism – "the only girl I've ever loved was born with roses in her eyes...now she's a little boy in Spain, playing pianos filled with flames."

5. THE CLASH – LONDON CALLING

The Clash's seminal album cover smashed through Elvis Presley and all of traditional 'pop' music with an incredible self-awareness and prescience for what their music would inspire in the masses. Its parody of Elvis's album launched punk music and ethos into society's collective consciousness far more effectively than their contemporaries, The Sex Pistols. Where the Pistols chose shock tactics and lewd stage acts to capture young anarchists' hearts, the Clash promoted their destruction with a healthy dose of critical thinking.

6. BECK – ODELAY

And now for an album cover which doesn't totally match its recorded material. Beck's delightfully absurd depiction of a Komondor jumping over a hurdle fits perfectly with his off-kilter sense of humour. Yes, that's a breed of dog you see flying over the football field. Yes, Beck still remains musically relevant to this day. But none of his album covers have come this close to covering who Beck is, beneath the scientology and solid hip-hop beats.



7. THE VELVET UNDERGROUND – THE VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO

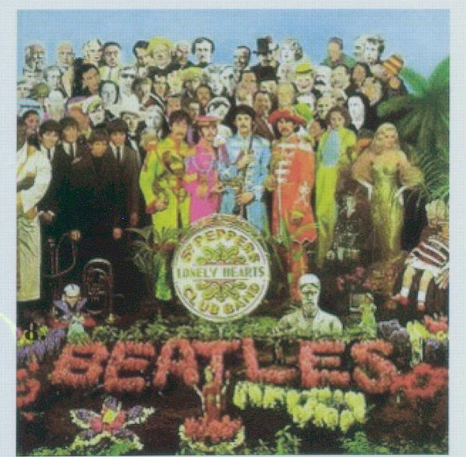
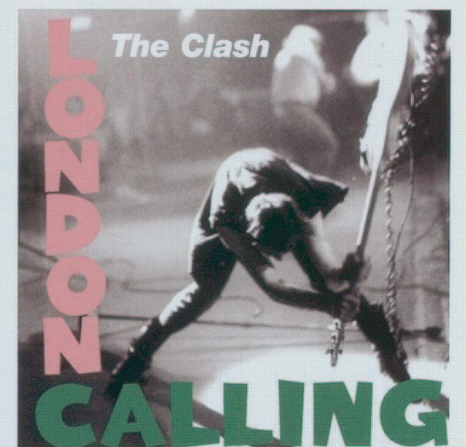
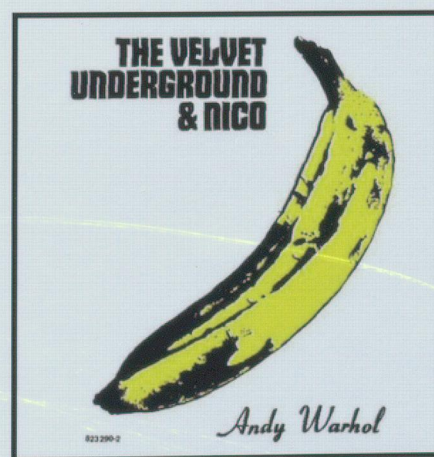
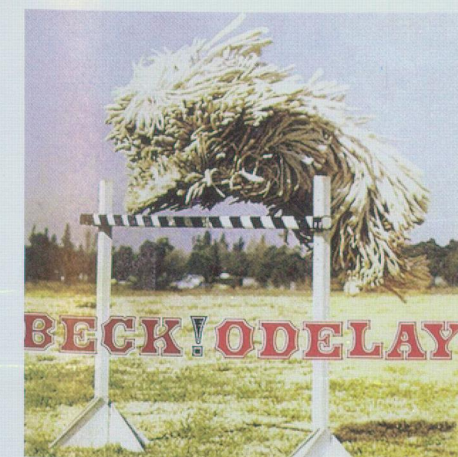
Andy Warhol's pet band released this album, their debut, in 1967, and it seemingly filled in the pages that Warhol had left blank. Where Warhol's art was made to be disposable and mass-produced, The Velvet Underground was a wholly personal and specific band, with lyrics like "I'll be your mirror, reflect what you are." Though the album seemed to sport the same kind of art that Andy Warhol was already comfortable in producing, its real a-peel came when delighted consumers found out the banana was a sticker.

8. THE BEATLES – SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

A classic album cover cannot be separated from its contents, and this album is as classic as it gets. At this point in the Beatles' career, they had synthesized all their disparate influences to completely own their sound. The album's cover pokes fun at the band's musical maturity by collecting a mass of these influences. The range is incredible: from writers such as Huxley and Carroll to fellow songwriters like Dylan to Mae West and Carl Jung. Through songs such as "A Day in the Life", it was evident that the Beatles had rightfully placed themselves in the legacy of the Western canon.



Fan Wu is a first-year Ethics and Political Science Major. He believes music is as much a drug as marijuana. He's waiting for Jeff Mangum to crawl into his bed one night and drench him in milk and holy water.



SUMMED UP IN SOUND THE NOSTALGIA OF T.V. SHOW THEME SONGS

By: Elena Gritzan

For many of us, the end of a long and stressful day is the perfect time to curl up on the couch with a cup of tea and spend an hour with our favourite forensic investigators, reality show contestants or Upper East Side drama queens. There is nothing that quite prepares us for our nightly escape into other people's lives as the theme songs that introduce us to our favourite TV shows. People often focus on the personalities of the characters or the heart-wrenching plot twists, but it is the opening tune that really draws one into a show week after week.

Each generation relates to one another by reminiscing about what shows they watched during their childhood. The first thing many people remember about a show is the song that goes with it. What says growing up in the 90s more than the distorted guitar opening that segued into Beverly Hills 90210? And what brings back the 60s more than the creepy, finger-snapping Adams Family theme? (Which was composed on a cobweb-covered piano! How appropriate.)

Even a quick Google search of "TV show theme songs" proves how attached people can become to the TV show theme music

memories associated with that show. With the aforementioned Boy Meets World, all it took was a minute of "oh yeah, I remember that!" and I was flooded with images of Topanga dancing in Corey's kitchen with lipstick on her face, and Mr. Feeney giving precious life advice. A great theme song can sum up multiple seasons and hours of episodes into a memorable, bite-size package. A great example of this is



that reminds them of their childhood and the characters they grew up watching. One could spend hours going through the many web directories out there, listening to the songs that provided the soundtrack for the lives of characters, like the Brady family, or Jerry and Kramer. While on one such web search, I found myself spending an afternoon blasting songs from shows that I have not heard for years. Apparently I still know all of the words to the Boy Meets World theme, and it has been years!

The average theme song only runs for about a minute, but that is all you need to trigger the

The Big Bang Theory. The show's theme song, by the Barenaked Ladies, is a quirky journey through the history of science and perfectly reflects the hilarious show, which is about four nerdy scientists. Another great example is that of Friends, a show about the relationships of six buddies (and sometimes flames) living in New York City, which can be summarized completely by the theme song's refrain "I'll Be There for You".

Some theme songs can even become larger than the shows with which they were originally paired. The Jeopardy theme song has be-

come ubiquitous in day-to-day life. I know that I am not the only one guilty of singing it while waiting for a friend to do something. I once had a teacher who would sing the meandering Twilight Zone theme song whenever something strange happened. Interestingly, the producers were constantly trying to change this classic theme because they thought it was too creepy.

A great theme song can sum up multiple seasons and hours of episodes into a memorable, bite-sized package

Theme songs have become ways to express specific ideas because they give us common ground. A melody becomes associated with lives lived out on the small screen, which in turn reminds us of the lives we were living when we tuned in. That is the beauty of any art form—while it is created with a specific intent by the

artist, it takes on a different meaning for every viewer based on their perspective at the time they were exposed to it.

Of course, it takes a lot of work to create a song that people will hum to themselves for decades. The first theme songs for television cropped up in the late 40s, when the medium was really starting to take hold in people's lives. Many of the first television shows were new versions of pre-existing radio shows, so the theme music simply followed the characters and the story from one medium to the other. Many old classical pieces were used to introduce shows, one of the most famous being The Lone Ranger opening sequence, set to the lilt of the "William Tell Overture". Original compositions grew in prevalence over time. Composers became more creative with instruments—such as using contrabass bassoon and timpani in The Flintstones theme song. Television producers made the innovative

move of enlisting the TV actors as singers—such as Kelsey Grammar belting out the Fraiser theme song. Theme songs today continue to push the boundaries creatively, making long-lasting memories for audiences across the world.

If you are reading this at the end of the day, the average Canadian family has already watched TV for over three hours. Thus, it is understandable that we hear our favourite theme songs hundreds of times in a year. That's a lot of the cast of Two and a Half Men lip-synching into microphones during the cabaret-style opening sequence (interestingly enough, at least one of the voices is actually a woman!) or Vincent D'Onofrio stopping criminals to the smooth theme song of Law and Order. Overall, like any of our favourite songs, TV show theme songs make us feel at home, as they announce the next chapter in the lives of our favourite characters. So sit back, relax, enjoy the music, and the show!



A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO JAZZ

1925-1960

Listening to Jazz can be a frightening experience, even for someone who is well versed in it. As one of the most complex styles of music out there, it's easy to get lost, bored, or even intimidated by some of the recordings. What follows is an easy to swallow guide to some of the best (if not the most famous) examples of Jazz for the lay person's listening pleasure.



1: LOUIS ARMSTRONG: HOT FIVES AND HOT SEVENS, 1927-28

Louis Armstrong was the father of improvisation, a true creative force of the twentieth century. Here we find him backed by some of the best bands he ever worked with. With legends Earl Hines on piano and Zutty Singleton or Baby Dodds on Drums, one can glean from this record a fairly complete picture of Armstrong's standing in the late twenties.



4: CHARLIE PARKER: CHARLIE PARKER WITH STRINGS, 1950

Although this album is not traditional in its instrumentation, it is still a fantastic view of Bird's ability and lyricism on the saxophone. The string section plays its part, but this record is still about Parker being backed by the great Ray Brown and Buddy Rich. This is a must have for anyone who is not familiar with Parker.



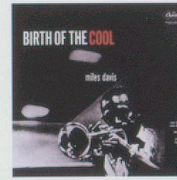
2: BILLY HOLIDAY & LESTER YOUNG: A MUSICAL ROMANCE, 1935-1959

Most of these tracks come from the mid-thirties recordings of Billie with Teddy Wilson and Lester Young. Not only is it Billie at her absolute best, but Lester compliments her perfectly. This album represents the best of lyrical Jazz, whether or not it's being done by a vocalist.



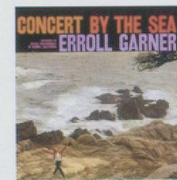
5: ROY ELDRIDGE AND DIZZY GILLESPIE: COMPLETE TRUMPET KINGS BATTLE, 1954

On this record we have two of the finest trumpet players who ever lived, backed by one of the most swinging quartets ever to record. The Oscar Peterson Trio plus J.C. Heard performs beautifully, but the real show is the dialogue between Dizzy and Roy. Although the two are a generation apart, you can feel the love between them, and the mutual understanding of each other's language.



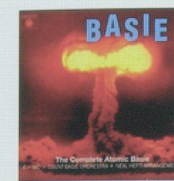
3: MILES DAVIS & GIL EVANS: BIRTH OF THE COOL, 1949

Although most people would suggest *Kind of Blue*, *Birth of the Cool* is just as enjoyable (not to mention, much less trod). For the beginner Jazz listener, it presents an easy to swallow large ensemble sound, the brilliant arrangements of Gil Evans, the minimalistic tendencies of Miles Davis, and a supporting cast of the top soloists and arrangers of the time.



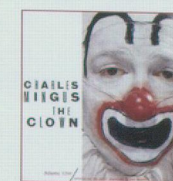
6: ERROLL GARNER: CONCERT BY THE SEA, 1955

Erroll Garner's biography is called *The Most Happy Piano*. Listening to this record, one can see why. Although the sentiment of this record is carefree and swinging, it is powered by one of the most proficient pianists of all time. His swing feel is unmatched, and his time is perfect. The marvel is that despite the technical goings on, it remains a relaxing joy to listen to.



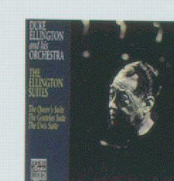
7: COUNT BASIE: THE COMPLETE ATOMIC BASIE, 1957

This is easily a contender for the most swinging album in the history of music as a result of its brilliant arranging by Neal Hefti, excellent solos all around the bandstand, and a rhythm section that is at once sensitive and fiery. If one is looking for exciting, swinging music, the search stops here.



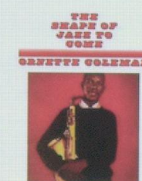
8: CHARLES MINGUS: THE CLOWN, 1957

Equal parts Be-bop, Hard Bop, compositional genius and insanity; this record is a picture of one of the most individual artists of our time. Different layers of melodies and a ton of soul help this record to be listenable and avant-garde at the same time.



9: DUKE ELLINGTON: THE QUEENS SUITE, 1959

Any Ellington recording could be in this spot and have the same statements said about it. *The Queen's Suite* is a sophisticated album, suited for one in the mood for a more intellectual experience. All of the soloists have had their personality illuminated by Ellington's writing, and Billy Strayhorn's fingerprints are all over the score as well. The writing is absolutely first rate (even for Ellington), and the band is on point. However, it is the meditative centerpiece, "The Single Petal of a Rose" which gives us the best insight into the mind of Duke Ellington. Finding such a personal statement from a musician is rare, especially from one of such magnitude.



10: ORNETTE COLEMAN: THE SHAPE OF JAZZ TO COME, 1959

This record moves into the realm of high art rather than entertainment, but it is still an important record for beginners. It is a gateway into more advanced styles of Jazz, a trailblazing record which mixes the traditional feel and format of the time with the unseen avant-garde. Although the record is harmonically free, the rhythmic sensibilities of the players stay firmly grounded in the tradition (and at the highest level). It is important to note for the beginner that Ornette's playing is more a picture of the human condition than a melody to sing along with.

There are many other records that deserve listening, but these are ten which are a good primer for the uneducated. With these under their belt, anyone can move on into the sixties and beyond, and become more familiar with this powerful music.



Martin Porter is in fourth year studying Jazz Piano Performance. He has lived and played in Cleveland, Ft. Lauderdale, and Toronto. Check out his jazz blog at www.playedtwice.wordpress.com.

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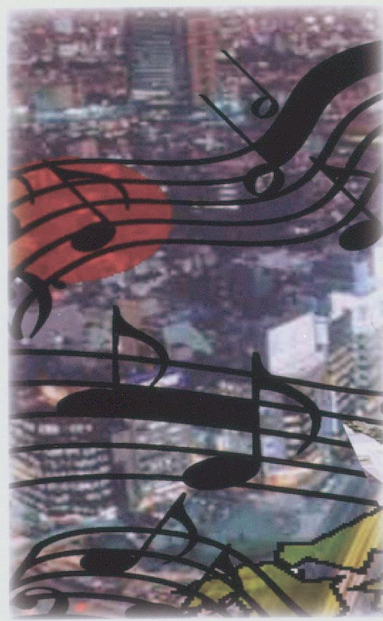
Extra-curricular

The choice is yours. Of course, you've had it all along. What you decide to do in your free time is totally up to you. Maybe you would rather be playing volleyball, or working part-time, there are so many choices a student can make about how to spend their time. So the question is, why do some University students choose to involve themselves with music, or even something as seemingly lame as a student choir? My name is Q Chen, and I am currently an active member of a male student choir in Tokyo, Japan. This short article is about what changed for me with regards to that simple question, since I arrived in Japan.

Music is important to many students. It can give that light spring in your step as you exit the subway and walk to your morning class. iPods and other music playing devices are what you would expect in most students' pockets...that is, in Canada. In Tokyo, Japan, it is actually a rare sight. It is strange to think that a city known for its technological advancements would have so many people who do not own an iPod. Maybe they do, but it is rare to see people wearing headphones on the streets.

One of the reasons why Japanese people do not often wear headphones is because it is a culture where a certain degree of courtesy to others is essential. Wearing headphones is not only rude, but may also cause you to miss out on important information that is only said once. One Japanese Professor of mine said that for Japanese people, a lot of information is unspoken, and the listeners must fill in the blanks left by the speaker. Japan is a "high-context society". I do not yet completely agree with that statement, but I do agree with the "society" part of it. Japan is very community-based, if you are a university student here, you would probably need to join a student group if you want to have any kind of social life. This is one of the reasons many non-music students join musical groups.

Do not let me give you the wrong impression of Japan, students are not forced into any organizations that they hate. Most of the students who joined the Jazz band or male choirs enjoy their stay very much, even if they had never read



Life: Music?

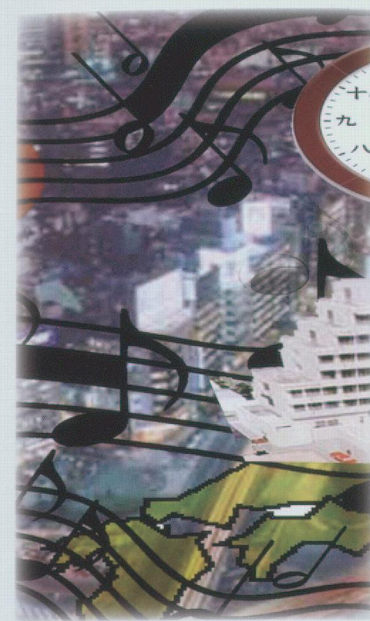
sheet music prior to university. It is the same everywhere, but what I want to talk about is why joining a music group is even more significant to a Japanese university student.

Japan is a small place, only a fraction of the size of Ontario; and Tokyo is Japan's largest city. Due to its population density, there is not much space to move about and there is almost no public space for sports recreation. For the average student, joining a sports team is difficult because of the tight schedules for booking practice space. Unfortunately, music also suffers from a lack of space. At the Student Activity Centre (*Gakusei Kaikan*), only the second level basement and the two uppermost floors are dedicated to music students' use. The building is not big, and most of the rooms are private, so the students practice in the hallway, garbage area, loft, and even the stairway between floors. At any given time during the building's hours of operation, there will be students on each floor practicing.

We may think it is easier for a student to practice music because of its versatility: you can play an instrument in a small room, but you need to use a big field for baseball. The truth is that there is also an inverse correlation between space and participation. Japanese students do not practice at home, but return to the Activity Centre four to seven days per week. They prefer practicing with others, regardless of how noisy the practice is. It is strange, but it is a pattern that I have noticed.

I joined the male choir, the Glee Club. It has since become my life, with three to five practices of over three hours each, every week. As someone who loves singing, I sincerely wish there were more public space for practices. I miss the freedom in Toronto, where you can walk to the back of Robarts Library and sit down on the grass. In Tokyo, there is grass, but you are usually not allowed to sit on it. Living in a dormitory means that when I practice singing, my neighbors on the entire floor can hear me. Remember the "courtesy" aspect of Japanese culture? It is no wonder the students return to the *Gakusei Kaikan* for practice.

The most fundamental difference between Canadian students and Japanese students is that Canadians see music as something



University Students

inborn, natural, and even comical; having a Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto also means that students have greater exposure to musical education. In Japan, music, like language or visual art, has more of an "aura" surrounding it, so people treat it a bit more formally. At my exchange university, there is no department for music or for any of the performing arts, so for a student to pursue music, they would need to really show dedication and commitment. Prior to our concert in November, the Glee Club held four auditions in addition to four sub-team performances, in order to check if the singers had memorized the music. It was serious.

I talked to a few Japanese students about whether it is correct to be so serious about an extracurricular activity. On average, a choir student practices a total of over fourteen hours per week, sometimes exceeding twenty hours. This is directly reflective of the Japanese working schedule: workers work unpaid overtime in order to perfect the final product. So the Japanese students argued that being so immersed in choir life is good for character-building; that later in life, such discipline would be helpful. They added that students make connections with upperclassmen, which could provide them with various types of assistance later in life. Japan is a competitive society, but is music only an excuse to get higher on the societal ladder? The problem with this line of thinking is that for me, music is an art that should at all times contain elements of free expression and mood-mediation. There should not be as much pressure put into something musical. Is the only mood involved with music performance "stressful"? I worry about the first-year students whose first experience participating in a musical group is so fast-paced and reminiscent of actual working life. It is useless to think that they would pursue a career in music, but with the experiences they have had at the Club, they probably would remember most of the "discipline" and none of the music. They might even lose some of their natural enjoyment of music in the process. I spent a long time explaining my thinking to the Japanese students, and they conceded, "well, in Japan, if you join any organization, it is the same."



in Japan

To conclude, I miss the more relaxed and care-free nature of U of T music groups. I miss the opportunity to sit on the lawn of Hart House and the study rooms at Innis College. The fast pace of Japanese living is refreshing and self-actualizing, but it is claustrophobic. Music has changed from personal enjoyment to a goal and a way to fit into a competitive society. Although joining music groups creates new friendships and experiences, they are much more of a "task" than an "enjoyment".

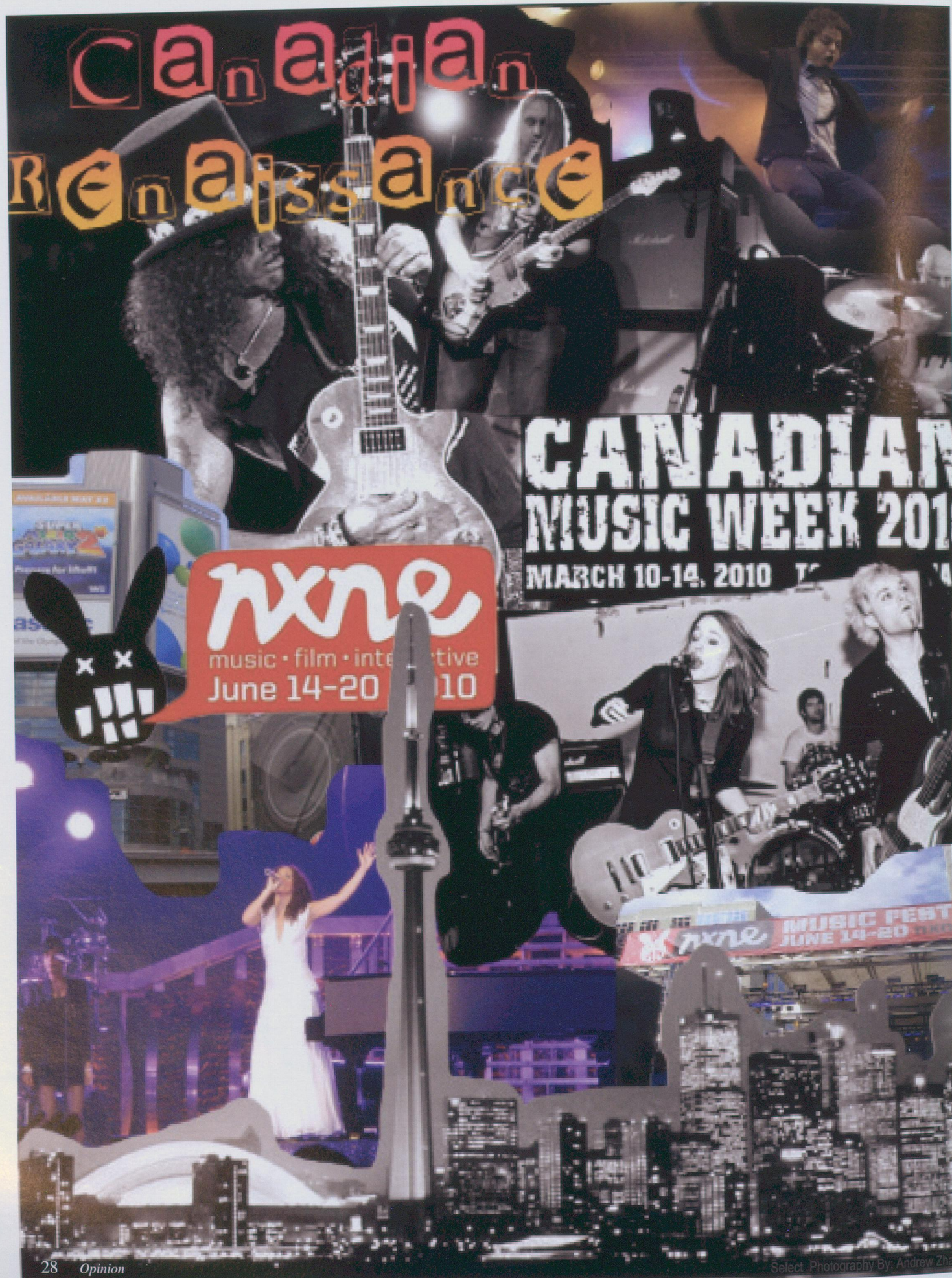
For those of you in Toronto, I recommend embracing the freedom and the space you have—take advantage of your ability to express your music without confines.



The Glee Club

Q Chen is a third year art student, currently studying abroad in Tokyo, Japan. In his spare time, he watches old breakfast cereal commercials and remixes their soundtracks.





Long before Drake was sipping cocktails in the VIP section and even longer before Justin Bieber had throngs of teenage girls following his every move, Canada's musical landscape was considered a barren wasteland as far as the rest of the world was concerned. There have been great acts to emerge, including the reputable Neil Young and Leonard Cohen but both had to travel south of the border in order to gain recognition. Fast-forward 40 years on your Betamax. Presently, we have the young Bieber ready to become the next Justin Timberlake, and he didn't even have to leave his bedroom in Stratford, Ontario to become famous. Then there's the experience of Arcade Fire, who actually moved from America to Canada before gaining enough recognition to sell out multiple dates at Madison Square Garden. Canadian musicians are indeed attracting international attention at a fast rate, and this, like the evolution of many art forms today, has largely been the result of the Internet. Here we focus on two music festivals that aim to continue this upward trend.

“NXNE is clearly based on the focus of the actual music; ... CMW and its events are geared towards the corporate faction of the music industry.”

Canadian Music Week (CMW) and North by Northeast (NXNE) are both annual music conferences taking place in the heart of downtown Toronto and have grown into two of Canada's largest music festivals. In the past, CMW has hosted such illustrious guests as Gene Simmons and Public Enemy while NXNE has cultivated more independent musicians and tastemakers including the likes Dinosaur Jr. and Sufjan Stevens would suggest. The 2010 edition of the festivals had both high commercial and entertainment value. CMW's main attraction was Slash, of Guns N' Roses fame, and I was lucky enough to catch his celebrity interview which consisted mainly of anecdotes from the band's early days as well as plugs for his new solo album and autobiography. Apart from that, my CMW experience consisted of a massive Air Canada Centre show by Alicia Keys that had the entire stadium singing along, although I was anxiously awaiting “Empire State of Mind” the whole time. Along with that, I had the chance to attend more intimate shows by the likes of vintage electro band Neon Indian, Mercury Prize winner Speech Debelle and New Jersey natives Real Estate. The highlight of NXNE is a series of free shows spanning the week. Last year's headliners included the Black Lips and GZA of Wu-Tang Clan fame. This year organizers took things a step further and the headliner was none other than Iggy & the Stooges, which claims to have made history in Toronto with 25 000 fans packing Yonge & Dundas Square. History or not, the sea of sweaty, shirtless moshers made it feel as if a prehistoric war was being waged.

So far it would seem that NXNE and CMW are two very similar, if not redundant events as they take place a mere three months away from each other; but I nonetheless came away from both with a different experience. NXNE is clearly based on the focus of the actual music; what else should a music festival focus on anyway? In my opinion, CMW and its events are geared towards the corporate faction of the music industry. In fact, Canadian Music Week itself is comprised of a summit between music industry big wigs and panel discussions (amongst music executives and musicians) where the main focus is not only to develop musicians, but to promote the growth of Canadian record labels as well. The actual performances are still a part of Canadian Music Fest but can be viewed as an afterthought of the broader experience. Though festivals that focus on live performances, such as NXNE, are key for exposing Canadian musicians to international record executives, do Canadian musicians actually need any more exposure in the first place? Awareness of Canadian talent has reached a sort of peak so in order to ensure the growth of the Canadian music industry; the focus should be on developing

our record labels. This is exactly what CMW seeks to achieve by facilitating interaction between labels and artists as well as supporting smaller independent companies.

Although most noteworthy Canadian musicians are now able to gain recognition without leaving home, the first record deal that many of them sign is still with an American label, where all the money is. The fact that Canadian musicians are still highly dependent on American labels demonstrates how crucial conferences like CMW are for our music. But still, for those of us that seek to enjoy the musical experience without thinking about its bothersome politics, the two weeks that make up CMW and NXNE are as sweet as it gets.

Andrew Zhai has been trudging through the swamp that is Biochemistry at U of T for four years. Now that he is almost out, he would like to thank the following artists for helping him survive the journey: Interpol, the Pixies and John Coltrane.



I LEFT MY HEART IN SAN FRANCISCO:

MUSIC LOVER FROM SAN FRANCISCO CONSIDERS THE SCENE IN TORONTO COMPARED TO HER HOME CITY.

I consider music to be the most important thing in life. Therefore, when choosing where to go to University, one of the first considerations was that I had to be in a city where my favorite bands would play on their tours. It is always interesting to hear people describe their experiences with music prior to University, compared to what they are exposed to now. For many people who come from smaller towns in Ontario, the move to the big city to attend University of Toronto means greater exposure to music. I moved here from San Francisco, California, so I was lucky to attend an amazing array of shows growing up.

I have found that, like many things about Toronto, the main contrast between here and the San Francisco Bay Area is that on the whole people are a little less welcoming, particularly in the music scene. While writing for the San Francisco online music magazine "The Deli SF" (<http://sf.thedelimagazine.com/>) I became immersed in the local scene quickly. One connection led to another, until I reached the point where I would go to a show and personally know most of the bands playing and other musicians in the audience.

Toronto does have a tight music scene as well, with a strong community connection at the Dundas/Ossington venue, The Dakota Tavern. But since the bands from that scene, such as Feist and Broken Social Scene, have reached widespread fame, I suppose it is more difficult to become involved with the scene as a music journalist or fan. The Dakota has many secret shows with these artists, while their usual shows are announced on their website and feature smaller Canadian musicians.

The alternative rock-folk-roots scene is quite strong in both cities, and that is where you find a very interconnected community of musicians. I spoke to Toronto based folk-country musician Doug Paisley (<http://dougpaisley.com/>) about his fall release Constant Companion which features Feist on two songs, and he stated: "Music is inherently collaborative. Even if you are solely a songwriter, you still write songs with people and play with other people. In Toronto you are likely to encounter everyone in the music scene, because of the proximity of other artists. Feist and I are friends... Music is an extension of your social life. It is important to me to have that connection, where we are always going to create, and know it is more than the sum of its parts. The music scene in Toronto is mutually supportive. It doesn't seem very divided. Even though there are a lot of different kinds of music, people will still play together and work together."

He continued by explaining that "It is a small scene in Toronto as far as a market within Canada though, so it is not enough to sustain a musician. Musicians who are less commercially minded can potentially be more creative. But that means that less people do it, which is sad and unfortunate. But it also is sort of more like it used to be, where people were musicians and had another occupation as well. It's a part of life, but rarely your whole life."

That seems to be another key difference—although Toronto is a hub for arts and entertainment in Canada, it is a bit harder to gain widespread fame in Canada and North America when musicians are only well known in Toronto. Well known artists in San Francisco have been able to attain country-wide as well as world-wide atten-



Photo By: The Union Street Inn

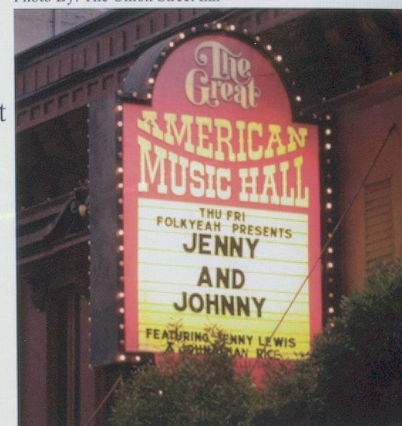


Photo By: Johnathan Flemming



Photo By: Downtown Yonge Improvement Area



Photo By: Zero Penalty

tion through touring and coverage in a variety of media. A key example of this is the San Francisco based blues-rock band Two Gallants (<http://twogallants.com/>). Over the course of their three albums and one EP between 2002 and 2007, they have toured almost non-stop between recording albums, gaining acclaim in such lauded publications as Rolling Stone magazine and Pitchfork.com. Since then, they have both had solo projects that were released this summer.

Additionally, there is a noticeable contrast between the venues in each city. Although both San Francisco and Toronto have their share of bigger, more modern venues, and then smaller, homier venues, I find that bigger bands still tend to play the small venues in San Francisco. Toronto's most respected venue is arguably Massey Hall, which is beautiful and has a large capacity, but is limited since there is no general admission area. San Francisco's most famed venue is probably the Fillmore, which is known for its open-dance-floor style, with seats only in the upper balcony. Therefore, the concert experience at Massey Hall is completely different from seeing a band at the Fillmore, because you can only dance so much in your seat.

Bigger bands in the alternative rock scene will usually play The Sound Academy or Kool Haus, which are architecturally designed to be functional, with little more than a disco ball as part of the venues permanent decorations. They serve their purpose, but many complain about the sound quality even though they are new venues. When I attend shows at those venues, such as Spoon or Jenny and Johnny, I nostalgically wish I was at my favorite venue at home, The Great American Music Hall. Amazing bands play that venue, and it is one of the best in San Francisco. It could be compared to The Rivoli in Toronto, as both were built in the 1920s for Vaudeville shows, and therefore they have more ornate interiors than modern venues. Additionally, The Rivoli is buzzed about as the hot spot in Toronto for independent bands to play.

San Francisco has many other older venues, which create a culturally rich feeling. Most big alternative rock musicians today play at the Fillmore, the Great American Music Hall, or the Warfield (a beautiful venue), when coming through San Francisco. This allows for a high level of audience interaction, since they are all general admission on the dance floor.

Toronto does have its share of interesting venues as well, such as the Horseshoe Tavern, El Mocambo, the Silver Dollar, Grossman's Tavern, the Drake Hotel and the Cameron House. The latter two are attractions for many different forms of artwork, including a stage for musical performances. While the Drake only opened less than a decade ago, the Cameron House is over 80 years old. Furthermore, the Drake really is a hotel with rooms rented out to the public, whereas the Cameron's hotel rooms are for local musicians to stay in and rehearse.

If you are more concerned with checking out an interesting scene and hearing authentic new music, Toronto seems to be great for that. If you are into mainstream music, then of course there are the mega-theaters such as the Molson Amphitheater. But if you want to see better known alternative rock artists in intimate, older venues, then San Francisco is your perfect destination. The city has its share of smaller venues as well, where you are practically face to face with the band because the stage is so low. A few highlights include the Rickshaw Stop, the Makeout Room and Café Du Nord. Even if you do not make it to San Francisco anytime soon to verify my comparisons, at least now you can brag to your friends about your obscure knowledge of venues in San Francisco.



Shauna Keddy is in third year studying English, Writing & Rhetoric, and Music History & Culture. She aspires to be a music journalist and thinks the very best thing about life is the moment between the end of a concert and the encore, when everyone is the crowd is screaming and clapping and everything else fades away but your desire to see the band play just a few more songs.

Death Metal: A Sophisticated and Diverse Form of Music

Death metal is a passionate and extreme art form. Death metal's complex and diverse nature tends to make it inaccessible to many. But what exactly is "death metal"?

The term itself sounds pretty menacing. Death metal is just a categorization, perhaps a misleading one, of a certain style of music. The general consensus is that death metal has fast paced tempos, intricate rhythms, chromatic and atonal melodies, and intense, abrasive vocals. One of the most fascinating aspects of death metal is that it has a violent and harsh timbre, providing the listener with chaotic, ominous, and exhilarating emotions. Despite this characteristic, it is still very precise and calculated. Death metal gives the musician the substantial challenge of playing complicated, unusual, and many times dissonant parts accurately. The ability to perform these tasks well, often distinguishes the quality of different bands.



Photo by: Pablo Villagra

The types of compositions that encompass death metal are widely varied; they are usually scored for one or two guitars, an electric bass, a vocalist, and a drummer. The guitar parts tend to involve two main components: heavily syncopated and rapid

Photo by: Dave Eltheridge-Barnes/Getty Images



chords in the instrument's lower register and technically demanding soloistic "shredding" parts that utilize advanced guitar techniques of sweeping and tapping. The bassist usually follows along with both categories of guitar parts, giving the whole band a brisk rhythmic foundation. The drummer has a prominent role, playing very quickly, but using precise and unique techniques such as blast beats (a combination of a double bass drum pedal and snare). The vocalist has the infamous role of the "screamer", passionately vociferating deep inner feelings, dark stories, or politically charged statements in a fitting discordant vocal style. The compositions often involve switching between regular and compound meters and using irregular interval jumps in the melodies. Thus requiring the full attention of the listener in order to truly appreciate the music.

There is a rich culture attached to this style of music. Death metal started off in the early 1990s, influenced by thrash metal bands like Slayer and

Venom. Since then, the genre has greatly diversified and there are many different types and many talented bands with a very dedicated following. Additionally, an entire subculture developed; forming new art, fashion and lifestyles influenced by the fervour of death metal. It arose as a counterculture against mainstream American culture, but also as form of music that challenged musicians more so than "regular" metal. This is similar to the difference between avant-garde and classical, or any historical musical revelation for that matter. Also comparable to classical music is death metal's status in our society. Just as Mozart was once heavily criticized by the people of his time for being too unorthodox and adventurous, death metal as a whole faces the same scrutiny. In conclusion, just like any music, death metal is an acquired taste, requiring dedication and attentive listening in order to be fully appreciated.



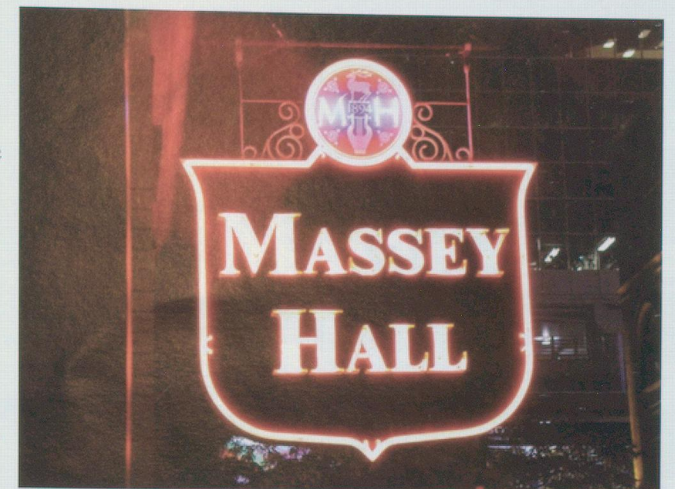
Michael Stecky-Efantis is a second year physics student. He plays classical double-bass and electric bass and listens to rad music: his current playlist is Dying Fetus and The Faceless.

CHICK COREA with Christian McBride And Brian Blade At Massey Hall

Massey Hall's historic stage is no stranger to all-star jazz ensembles. It was the site of the 'greatest' jazz concert of all time – the only time that Charlie Parker, Dizzie Gillespie, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach all shared the same stage. Well aware of this fact, Chick Corea walked onto the stage and looked down at its aged floorboards in reverence. "We grew up listening to that concert," Corea said to the audience before sitting down to play with his new trio featuring Christian McBride on bass and Brian Blade on drums.

The concert began with a new song that was appropriately named "This is New," followed by a unique jazz interpretation of an etude by Alexander Scriabin. However, the trio did not get really hot until the third number: Thelonious Monk's "Work." Their interpretation of "Work" was a combination of funk and swing that simultaneously maintained the bop feel of the tune. During "Work"

Chick felt free to play bass lines on the lower register of the piano, while McBride would solo freely on the upper registers of his bass (often using dyads), then returning to the walking bass line once again. Other highlights of the night included the Chick Corea tunes: "Now He Sings, Now He Sobs" and "Fingerprints." Christian McBride's "Sister Rosa," was a bluesy homage to the civil rights activist (Rosa Parks) after whom the song was named. As well as Brian Blade's "Alpha and Omega," which was a slow ballad like piece that held the audience rapt with attention. However, the piece that really displayed this trio's artistry in full was the dramatic interpretation of a recently composed piano sonata by



Photos by: John Allaster

Chick Corea called "The Moon." The piece was nearly twenty-five minutes long and was highlighted by its dramatic shifts in mood. The trio would at times shift from startlingly avant-garde explosions to dramatically melodic passages where it seemed as if their counterpoint was perfect.

Chick Corea has reached iconic status in the jazz idiom as a result of his outstanding career. Not content with resting on his previous success, Chick relentlessly forges ahead with new groups and new music. Chick Corea, Christian McBride and Brian Blade came together that night at Massey Hall to channel music at the highest level and we can only hope that there will be a future album documenting this fantastic trio.

Rating:



John Allaster is a second year English student at U of T. His musical interests are wide ranging. However, Blues, Jazz, Rock 'n' Roll, and improvisational music (especially improvisational piano music) interest him the most.



"On these New York streets, where you and I would meet"

"Your mom's a nice lady."

These words, spoken to me by The Gaslight Anthem's lead singer Brian Fallon, are the gem of my pilgrimage to New York to see The Gaslight Anthem (TGA). Since forming the band in 2006, these New Brunswick/New Jersey boys have released three albums, one EP, and toured all over Europe and North America. Since their inception they have had a cult-like following, but really hit the ground running after releasing *The '59 Sound* in 2008. In 2009 they performed at the Hard Rock Calling festival in London, where Bruce Springsteen (their major musical influence and fellow New Jersey native) surprised them and a massive audience with a spontaneous guest appearance during the performance of their album's title track.

Cue my mother, (an avid Bruce Springsteen fan who even has a subscription to his fan site's quarterly magazine: *Backstreets*) calling me over to the laptop to show me a new band Bruce did a surprise performance with. Not particularly taken by the band, I did not think much of it. That summer, however, my family and I went on a road trip and about 50% of what we listened to on that drive was TGA. Now, if there is one thing these boys are good at, it is writing songs suited for the road. This was only the beginning.

My mother and I became part of their "jukebox Romeo" and "dime store Saint" fan base. We saw their Calgary show together in 2009 and could not wait to see their next one. Their next release was *American Slang* in June 2010. When this album came out, I was backpacking through Europe and had the amazing opportunity to see them play the Melkweg in Amsterdam. It is a testimony to their power that they have not only toured Europe twice, but everyone was singing every word to every song they played that night.

Still though, I wanted to see their show on home soil, preferably in Calgary with my mother. Fortune would not have that; TGA played Calgary while I was in Toronto, and played Toronto while I was at home in Calgary. Then I noticed they were going to be playing Radio City Music Hall in NYC at the end of September-this I could manage. My mother went on her own to see them at the beginning of September. Not only did she meet the band after the show, but she got every member of the band to sign a set list for me, which now holds a holy place on my wall. I was told I would have to do the same.

While I did not get them to sign a set list, I do have an autographed ticket and poster from their show at Radio City. And as a result of having had conversations with each band member; I got the opportunity to tell my mother that not only do the boys all remember her, but that the lead singer Brian Fallon thinks "she's a nice lady."

Set List

- . High Lonesome
- . Boxer
- . We Came To Dance
- . The Diamond Church Street Choir
- . Old White Lincoln
- . Even Cowgirls Get the Blues
- . Old Haunts
- . The '59 Sound
- . Bring It On
- . Miles Davis & The Cool
- . The Spirit of Jazz
- . Stand By Me/I'da Called You Woody, Joe
- . Angry Johnny and the Radio
- . Film Noir
- . Blue Jeans and White T-shirts
- . Great Expectations
- . We Did It When We Were Young

[encore]

- . American Slang
- . The Patient Ferris Wheel
- . Say I Won't (Recognize)
- . The Queen of Lower Chelsea
- . Here's Looking At You, Kid
- . She Loves You
- . The Backseat



Samantha Inwood is a first year English major who taught herself ukulele this summer! She enjoys listening to rock n' roll with a whole lotta soul.

Photo Taken By: Samantha Inwood

Review

The Dreamscape of Blonde Redhead with Pantha du Prince (Phoenix Concert Theatre 10/17/2010)

It was 9 o'clock when the hooded Pantha du Prince, moniker of Hendrick Weber's solo electro project, promptly stepped onto the stage. The entrance was inconspicuous and, when I looked over my shoulder, I noticed that a large portion of the crowd was unaware of his presence.

Without an uttered word, Weber's minimalist instrumentals began to fill the theatre from behind a macbook and amplifiers. I found his facial expressions amusing—as the set went on, he adopted a sort of snarl every time he applied heavier beats. My body was unsure of how to behave since the songs blended into one another and ranged from techno and house musings to the mere drone of (what sounded like) wind chimes. I settled on a sort of half-swaying, half-bobbing motion.

After a few tracks from his 2010 album, *Black Noise*, he pulled off his sweater and began to dance, instantly evoking schoolgirl-like shrieks from the audience. Though this was the anticlimactic height of any sort of artist-audience connection, Pantha's intense concentration during the performance was undeniably endearing.

The anticipation for Blonde Redhead was rising. I said this aloud to my newly acquainted friend and potential musical soulmate, Vaeda. "Maybe they'll play that song," she replied. "Anticipation", that is."

"Hopefully," I said, but I think we both realized that anything prior to 25 was most likely to be avoided during the show, to the dismay of myself and other BR fans.

Penny Sparkle, the band's freshly released album, was to be the focus of the night's set list. Greeted by a series of not-so-flattering reviews, the Swedish-produced record was deemed commercial and too weak to uphold the 17-year-old reputation of Blonde Redhead. Despite being my least favorite element of their discography, I cannot say that I wholly share the opinion of the scalding criticism written about the work.

Pitchfork described the album as "profoundly boring," while Toronto's Eye Weekly christened the New York City trio with a new name—"Bland Redhead". I think that both of these quotes are overreaching and that the album simply lacks the innovative approach present in their previous works. Apart from Kazu Makino's signature falsetto vocals, it is difficult to pinpoint that this record is released by the same band that produced earlier shoegaze gems such as *Misery is a Butterfly* and *Fake Can Be Just as Good*.

Onstage, the stands which I had assumed to be leading up to microphones suddenly lit up. I had failed to notice that there were light bulbs attached to them until the flickering began. Makino appeared in a white mask with tusks of long blonde hair flowing from the mouth. I was vaguely reminded of the quirky stage antics of Fever Ray's Karin Dreijer Andersson, who coincidentally enough shared the same production team for her solo debut as Penny Sparkle.

The people around me seemed to become entranced by the dreamscape placed before us. I observed a girl with big hair who swayed her body euphorically along with an obnoxiously drunk man three rows back, who finally ceased his nonsensical yelling. Bad reviews or not, the performance was powerful and far from bland. I found myself immersed in songs from the new album that I had not even known I appreciated, such as "Not Getting There" and "Oslo". This reiterated the idea that a live performance can give you, above all things, a unique perception of what a band is trying to get across.

Background photo taken by Anna Vilner



Anna Vilner is a second year student studying English and Psychology. Her cure for melancholy involves a glass of cheap wine and Cat Power's album, *The Greatest*

MUSIC AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AS A GAME WITH *Jim Kasher*

Jim Kasher is one of the most prolific songwriters in today's alternative rock scene. He is best known for his punk rock band, Cursive. They are one of the original bands on Omaha, Nebraska's Saddle Creek Records, the label made famous by Conor Oberst's band, Bright Eyes.

Kasher's first solo album was released this fall, and in true Kasher form it is a rollicking, emotional concept album. Fans of his work with Cursive, or his more experimental band, The Good Life, have come to expect cynical, clever and scathingly self-reflective lyrics, matched to infectious and beautifully arranged music. Kasher delivers on this album about marriage and the disappointments of adult life, echoing Cursive's third album, *Happy Hollow*. The themes of discontentment and failed dreams can be seen as an extension of the song from that album, "Dorothy At Forty".

Following Kasher's eleven releases to date, one can see an amazing blossoming of themes from one EP and CD to the next. Kasher truly understands the art of narrative and capturing a mood. He always keeps the listener emotionally attached, but also entertained. While wrestling with the disillusionment of love and life in your mid-thirties, he still works in enough tongue-in-cheek statements to keep his stories from becoming too disheartening. His singing style is another great appeal; as he raises his voice to a passionate howl that keeps your spirits high, you cannot help but sing along and relate to the truth in his lyrics; even if you are



more than ten years younger than him and nowhere near married life.

On Cursive's hit-album *The Ugly Organ*, the cello invigorates their punk-influenced songs. On this effort, Kasher does not disappoint with standard rock instruments, but instead includes saxophone, trombone, trumpet, violin, viola and more. The richness and musical complexity in alternative rock today is what makes the most exciting bands as great as they are—think of Arcade Fire or Andrew Bird. The album achieves a gorgeous symmetry, with a lush overture, and an extension of that opening song as the last track.

In the album's standout track, the slow and touching "Strays", Kasher sings "Writers are selfish, writers are egoists; I'm afraid I'm as bad as it gets. I keep forgetting to censor the truth, that's why I better write some kind of love song for you." It is statements like these that have characterized Kasher's writing since

Cursive's hit song "Art is Hard". But his exposed and brutal look at the inherent selfishness and unreasonable expectations of humans is just what leaves you wanting more every time you hear his work. It is this vulnerable outlook, which is also exhibited in the work of Bright Eyes and indie-queen Jenny Lewis, that makes listeners feel that musicians express what they are feeling, and therefore connect them to a community that understands them.

Who can help but agree with lines like, "And God forbid Cupid ever finish what he started"? Complete with "Life" board-game style artwork on the album, Kasher has certainly put forth another fascinating look at the human psyche, all set to terrific sweeping rhythms.

Rating:

By: Shauna Keddy

Marco Adamovic is a fifth year International Relations Major at the University of Toronto, who also studies Political Science and History. His current playlist includes Thievery Corporation, Vieux Farka Touré, Alaska 87, and Cinematic Orchestra.



Arbor Room Jazz POP Fills The

University of Toronto Alumnus, Shannon Butcher, released her sophomore Album

Little Hearts at a nearly-packed Arbor Room alongside some of Toronto's finest: Maxwell Roach on Drums; Ross Macintyre on Electric and Double bass; and Juno-award winner Adrean Farrugia on Keys; thus, the Butcher Quartet.

She set off on the evening's journey with "Joy in my Heart", the first track on the new record, and her first venture into composing. With poppy overtones and a solid foundation in jazz, Butcher is quite aptly able to blend the two genres without undermining the integrity of either. Bringing standards like Burt Bacharach's "Close Your Eyes" and Glenn Miller's "Skylark" to the stage, Butcher showed her familiarity with the vault. With a playfulness and innocence reminiscent of Judy Garland, Butcher shared her own affection towards "The Trolley Song". After capturing the true jazz heads, the audience was treated to what is becoming Butcher's signature: new chapters in the Jazz songbook.

Butcher is known for her own renditions of pop tunes: The Beatles, Tears for Fears, and Glass Tiger to name a few. Staying true to this formula, she laid out her friendly rendition of Bryan Adams' "Run to You", much to the delight of the Canadian audience, and reinforcing the reputation she is gaining for her blending of nostalgia with easy-listening. While tried and true, nostalgia can only go so far. Though her compositional creativity and sense of innovation warrant attention, it seemed to translate poorly into performance during the majority of the evening. It was only in at the halfway mark of the set—during Butcher's rendition of "Walk On By"—that the stiffness and residue of a 3 a.m. smoke-haze felt to be lifted. Her performance began. She was flowing, waving, and scatting as if guided by the breath of the music itself.

Staying on this wavelength—in perhaps the most original and entertaining part of the evening—Butcher and her drummer had a duet of their own. Behind Roach's built-in creativity and consistent, syncopated fills, they blended rising and falling dynamics in between the absence of any other instruments, for a truly engaging and unique segment of their set.

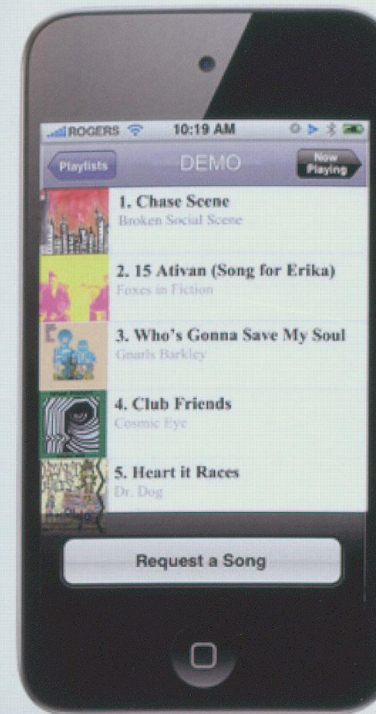


Photo By: Marco Adamovic

Rating:

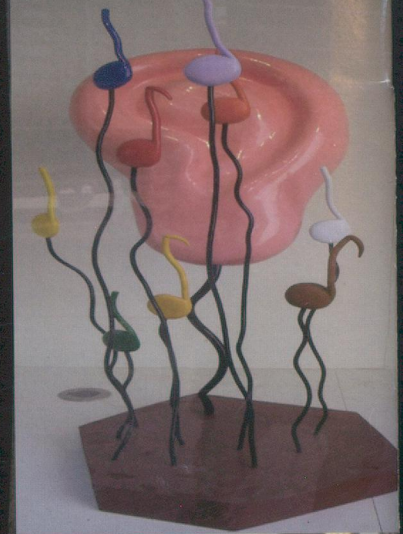


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